

Alt-MSA Handbook Part 3: Selecting, Writing, and Editing Mastery Objectives



Part 3 of the *Alt-MSA Handbook* describes the activities in Step 2 of the Alt-MSA process which relate to selecting or writing and Principal review of MOs (see Figure 3-1, below) and the specific operational steps in using the *Alt-MSA Online* system (<http://www.altmsa.com>) to select or write the MOs and print Alt-MSA test documents.

Figure 3-1

Step 2: Select or Write MOs (TET and Principal) October through December	
Activities	Handbook References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TET selects or writes MOs using MO Bank on <i>Alt-MSA Online</i> at student's grade level and instruct with grade-level and age-appropriate expectations. • Principal reviews and submits MOs by mid-November. • Parents/guardians receive Alt-MSA MOs. • Written MOs submitted for technical review, feedback received, and revisions made. 	Part 3

- An MO Bank incorporated into the *Alt-MSA Online* web application (<http://www.altmsa.com>) will be used for selecting MOs. All MOs in the Bank are aligned with the SC/CLG content standards, indicators, and objectives as well as the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. However, MOs are still required to be reviewed by the Principal or designee and submitted to the Alt-MSA contractor. This submission involves a verification check to ensure that all students have the proper number of objectives in the appropriate content areas.
- **Alt-MSA Mastery Objective Bank and College and Career-Ready Standards College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) Document**
In preparation for the transition to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS), content specialists from the MSDE and Pearson completed a review of the Alt-MSA mastery objective bank against the MCCRS. Local content specialist also participated in an item review process and then the MSDE content specialists completed a final approval of each MO in the bank. **During the Alt-MSA custom MO writing phase, no MOs can be written that do not align with the MCCRS.** To assist local educators with the transition of the Alt-MSA MO bank to the MCCRS, a spreadsheet has been developed that shows the current listing of all MOs in the Alt-MSA Online system and how each MO aligns or does not align to the MCCRS.

Use *Alt-MSA Online* to select or write custom MOs.

TETs may choose to write custom MOs if the objectives in the bank do not reflect the learning needs of an individual student.

Principal must review MOs.

Refer to pages 1-21 and 1-23 for specific Alt-MSA test administration dates.

Alt-MSA

Alternate Maryland School Assessment

TEs should use caution when changing just one word in a bank MO.

TEs should consider whether it is necessary to change the wording of a bank MO, or whether the change can be reflected in the submitted artifact.

FAQ

Q: When developing custom MOs, should the MO be written at the objective and indicator level within the SC?

A: Custom MOs should be written at the objective level, not both objective and indicator level.

This document was vetted by local content specialists and the Alt-MSA program management team and approved by the MSDE content specialists content areas.

- MSDE expects that the instructional and assessment needs of most students will be met by selecting MOs from the bank. **TETs, however, may choose to write custom MOs if the objectives in the bank do not reflect the learning needs of an individual student.** These newly-written MOs will be entered into *Alt-MSA Online*, and after Principal approval, these MOs will be submitted for contractor review. These submitted custom MOs will be reviewed in November to assure alignment with the Maryland content standards, indicators, and objectives. Feedback on these written MOs will be posted to *Alt-MSA Online*.

How to Write a Custom MO

- If a TE chooses to write a custom MO outside the Depth Of Knowledge constraints and/or the standard label does not appear in the bank, the correct SC standard label and grade should be inserted after the word, “Given”. For example, if a TE chooses a Grade 4 informational MO for a 5th grade student it would appear as, “Given (2.A.4.f grade 4) modified grade-level informational text(s) containing a cause and effect, student will identify the effect of the given cause.” To enter the custom MO in the online bank, the TE selects the closest available standard from the bank, in this example 2.A.4.f (grade 5), and then enters the content standard and correct grade alignment after the word “Given.” When the MO is reviewed it will be evaluated against the standard and grade listed within the MO.
- When choosing to write a custom MO, TEs are reminded that it is not necessary to take an MO from the current bank and add specific information such as how the artifact will be set up or how the student will perform the behavior specifically. The MO needs only to reflect the four components as found on page 3-6 through 3-7 of the handbook. MOs remain broad enough that an artifact can be created to enable the TE to apply the MO to a student’s artifact in a variety of circumstances. The artifact itself will show the specificity of how the student performs the behavior. Figure 3-2 provides examples of MOs that are custom written with unnecessary specificity. When reviewing the examples, TEs need to keep in mind that they could have selected directly from the MO Bank, kept the MO broad, created an artifact that showed the specifics of the behaviors individualized to a student and not be subject to contractor review.
- TEs should use caution when changing just one word in a bank MO. They need to determine if it is necessary to change the wording or can it be reflected in the artifact once submitted. Rewriting any word in a bank MO will change the MO status to a “custom” MO and will be subject to contractor review. Refer to figure 3-2 for examples. Selecting MOs directly from the Bank rather than writing custom MOs significantly increases the efficiency of the Alt-MSA assessment process by eliminating the MO Review and ensuring that the TET is working with an automatically approved, content-aligned MO as early as possible in the school year.

Figure 3-2

Example of MO written as Custom MO when TEs could have selected directly from the MO Bank

Custom Mastery Objective:

Grade 5	2.A.2.c	Given an illustration/photograph of a slow change to the surface of the Earth from a weathering process (e.g. freezing/thawing, solution, oxidation, plant growth, acid reaction), student will identify the weathering process that causes the change with prompting, 1 time with 100% accuracy.
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Alt-MSA Bank MO:

Given illustration(s)/photographs(s) of slow change(s) to the surface of the Earth from erosional or depositional process, student will identify the agent of change.

- MOs in the Bank are general statements and reflect the intent of the grade-level content standard objectives. For reading and mathematics aligned with science, TETs will select 10 MOs from the student's assigned grade level. The MOs included at each grade level are linked and aligned with the grade level SC/CLG content standards selected.
- Students in grades 5 and 8 are also assessed in five science content standards: Earth/Space, Life Science, Chemistry, Physics, and Environmental Science. Each student will have 10 MOs aligned with Science; 5 MOs are selected from the Science MO bank, and 2 reading MOs (1 vocabulary and 1 informational text) and 3 mathematics MOs (1 measurement and 2 data analysis) must also be aligned with science content. This alignment with science content must be evident in the artifacts and must reflect accurate science.
- Students in Grade 10 are also assessed in Biology Core Learning Goals (CLG). Each 10th grade student will have 10 science MOs aligned with Biology; 5 MOs are selected from the grade 10, Biology MO bank, in addition, 2 reading MOs (1 vocabulary and informational text) and 3 mathematics MOs (1 measurement and 2 data analysis) must also be aligned with Biology. This alignment to science must be evident in the artifacts and must reflect accurate science.
- Artifacts must reflect all the components in the MO and the specific content and materials used with the student to assess the MO. See Part 4 of this *Alt-MSA Handbook* for additional information about how to document content on the portfolio artifacts.

Part 7 of the *Alt-MSA Handbook* includes screen shots of the electronic test documents demonstrating the key components required by Alt-MSA. The test document forms in Part 7 are generated electronically by the online system, not by using manually produced or word-processed versions of these documents.

Alt-MSA

Alternate Maryland School Assessment

Students in grades 5 and 8 are assessed in 10 science MOs across 5 science content standards.

Students in grade 10 are assessed in 10 science MOs aligned with biology.

Note: When selecting Reading and Mathematics MOs from the bank for Vocabulary MO (6), Informational Text MO (7), Measurement MO (8), and Data Analysis MO (9, 10), the MOs are written in general terms, which will not reflect science content.

As a result, the artifacts (both baseline and mastery) must identify the alignment with science content. See examples at www.altmsa.com under the "Resource Center" tab.



TET Selects or Writes MOs (September-November)

Based on the analysis of the student's Alt-MSA performance in prior years and the results of pre-assessments, the TET selects skills and concepts that will be assessed for Alt-MSA. MOs must be **challenging yet attainable during the test window**. For additional guidance on TET roles and responsibilities and also on selecting MOs, please refer to the Alt-MSA Professional Development Online Training Modules. These modules are located on the Resource Tab of Alt-MSA Online.

- Prior to selecting or writing MOs, the TET will first identify the skills or concepts the student needs to learn related to the assessed content standard objectives. It is important for the team to articulate the essential learning found in the SC/CLG—what it is that all students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of instruction—which will move the student towards the stated grade-level standard. Outcomes for students with significant cognitive disabilities can then be identified to ensure appropriate expectations for their achievement.
- The TET selects or writes, 5 science MOs, 2 reading MOs aligned with science content and 3 mathematics MOs aligned with science content using the MO Bank in *Alt-MSA Online* (<http://www.altmsa.com>). MOs in the MO Bank are written in a general manner to enable them to apply to students in a variety of circumstances. For example, materials appropriate to the student should be used for instruction and assessment and will be apparent in the artifact; however, they will not be specified in the MO (e.g., “vocabulary words” may be printed words in a word bank on a worksheet, words written on index cards, picture symbols, textured picture symbol cards, or words or picture symbols displayed on switches).
- When selecting MOs that align to science for reading and mathematics, TETs must put careful and thoughtful year-long planning into the materials and instructional sequence that they will be using in their science instructional program. The alignment chosen must reflect accurate science as found in the SC/CLG at the student's appropriate grade level.
- Mastery Objective Bank Depth of Knowledge

Reading

- General Reading Processes, Informational Text, and Literary Text
 - Grade 5 may access MOs from their grade to PreK
 - Grade 8 may access MOs from their grade to grade 1
 - Grade 10 may access MOs from grade 10 to grade 3

Note: *TEs may write custom MOs from lower grades if the student's instructional level, due to severity of his/her disability, is below the grade level indicated. For example, a TE may write a custom MO at the kindergarten level for a 10th grade student.*

Mathematics

- Grade 5 may access MOs from their grade to PreK
- Grade 8 may access MOs from their grade to grade 1
- Grade 10 may access MOs from grade 10 to grade 3

Note: *TEs may write custom MOs from lower grades if the student's instructional level, due to the severity of his/her disability, is below the grade level indicated. For example, a TE may write a custom MO at the kindergarden level for a 10th grade student.*

Science

- Grade 5 may access MOs from grade 5 to grade 4 only
 - Grade 8 may access MOs from grade 8 to grade 6
 - Grade 10 will assess Biology only
- The MOs in *Alt-MSA Online* display skills in several formats, e.g.,
 - ___/___/___ OR ___, ___, ___. The TE selects the MO and may teach either all or some of the indicated skills, based on the student's instructional needs. This listing of skills reflects the scope and sequence of instruction across several grade levels. TEs are encouraged to use this scope and sequence to guide instructional decisions. TEs should highlight, circle or underline, the skill(s) the student will demonstrate on the artifact.
 - ___ and ___ OR ___, ___, ___ and ___. The TE must assess all skills indicated.
 - ___ and/or ___. The TE may assess one or both of the skills indicated, based on the student's instructional needs.
 - If an MO is selected or written with a condition or skill that is plural, then the artifact must show more than one of that skill or condition. For example; Given **words**, TE must give more than one word; find **answers** in text, student must find more than one answer; identify **actions** of the **characters**, student must identify more than one action from more than one character.

Alt-MSA

Alternate Maryland School Assessment

FAQ:

Q: Within the format of the MO, can commas be used in the same way as slashes, thus allowing teachers to pick and choose focus of instruction?

A. Yes, commas are used the same way as slashes (unless an 'and' is indicated within the slashes or commas) and the TE may teach all or some of the listed skills.

Alt-MSA

Alternate Maryland School Assessment

Use of Assistive Technology

For students who need to use assistance technology in order to respond to task directions for any given Mastery Objective, it is imperative that they have been taught a consistent and reliable response mode (e.g., head pointer, various types of switches, joy stick, a track ball) prior to instruction on the Mastery Objectives. **Documentation of instruction on the use of assistive technologies must be included in the portfolio if it is stated that the student needs full physical prompts.**

If a student does not have a reliable response mode at the start of the school year, the first step is to request your county's assistive technology team to evaluate the student's capabilities and recommend a response mode to be taught to the student. Then, it is the teacher's responsibility to teach the response mode so that the student has a reliable means to demonstrate what the student knows and can do, as well as communicate wants, needs, or make requests. When a reliable, consistent response mode has been taught, the teacher will have confidence that the content of each objective is being mastered.

Required Components and Format of MOs

The MOs in the MO Bank have 4 components and use the format below. The TET will make selections from a series of drop-down options. If the TET writes custom MOs, they will insert specific wording in Component 1 and 2. Specific instructions for the use of the MO Bank on *Alt-MSA Online* appear in the *Alt-MSA Online* Administrator Guide (Part 3) of the Alt-MSA Handbook.

Component 1	Given _____ Condition: task direction, stimulus, materials student will use, assistive technology with a minimum of 2 choices
Component 2	Student will _____ Student response: must be measurable and observable
Component 3	With Prompting or Independently
Component 4	At/for _____ Criterion for Acceptable Performance: percent correct and number of times student must demonstrate behavior.

Component 1: The conditions for performing the skill.

The TE will select the conditions the student will be given to perform the skill. In the MO Bank, these may be stated in general terms. It will not be necessary to add the specific conditions to the MO from the bank; this will be evident in the artifact developed to demonstrate the student has mastered the skill(s) (e.g., "Given modified grade-level text . . .").

Assistive technologies.

If the student requires the use of a "medium-tech" or "high-tech" assistive technologies (e.g., a switch) to communicate responses, indicate this by checking the AT box. **Be certain to provide student with response choices when assessing the MO to demonstrate that the student does in fact understand the concept or skill being assessed. Blank distracters are not a viable response choice for Alt-MSA purposes.**

- Switch with a minimum of 2 choices
- Other (specify)
- Refer to Part 4 in the Handbook for more information on Assistive Technology.



Component 2: The measurable, observable response the student is to produce. The generic term “identify” is often used in the MO Bank.

The TET will not fill in the blank that is indicated in this component.

However, the observable, measurable student responses must be evident on the baseline and mastered artifacts. The term “identify” is used to avoid limiting student response to behaviors selected early in the school year. The TE is thus encouraged to continue instructing students to expand their repertoire of response behaviors.

The artifact, however, should clearly indicate the specific measurable observable behavior. This will be more evident on a work sample, video or audiotape. TEs must remember to write the specific measurable behavior on a data chart.

Component 3: Support to Student.

Prompts: The system will default to “with prompting” unless “independent” is selected. The TE selects for the Mastery Objective whether they think the student will independently demonstrate mastery or require a prompt(s) to elicit a response. At this time in the Alt-MSA process, the TE will not identify the type of prompts. If the student will not be using prompts, select “independent”.

Component 4: The criterion for acceptable performance. State the criterion for an acceptable performance of the MOs.

For Alt-MSA, an objective will be considered mastered if the student demonstrates 80% to 100% accuracy. The criterion must include percent correct and the number of times the student must demonstrate the behavior.

Criterion for Mastery: Specify percentage and frequency of demonstration. Criterion Percentages are:

- 80%
- 85%
- 90%
- 95%
- 100%

AND

Frequency of Demonstration indicators are:

- One time
- Two times
- Three times
- Four times
- Five times

Reminder:

If TE indicates that the MO will be demonstrated more than one time, multiple artifacts of that MO must be submitted.



Refer to pages 1-21
through 1-23 for
specific Alt-MSA test
administration dates.

Principal Reviews and Submits Test Documents

After the science MOs, reading and math MOs aligned with science content have been selected from the MO Bank and recorded on the Alt-MSA test documents (using the forms on *Alt-MSA Online* represented in Part 7 of the *Alt-MSA Handbook*), the Principal or designee will review them. The Principal or designee then submits the Mastery Objectives to the test contractor via Alt-MSA Online. See the *Alt-MSA Online* Administration Guide in Part 3.

Although the Principal may elect to assign a designee to review and submit the Test Documents, the **Principal is accountable for ensuring that Alt-MSA timelines and procedures are followed.**

Parents/Guardians Receive Alt-MSA MOs

The Alt-MSA test documents for science MOs are shared with the student's parents/guardians so that they may:

- be informed about their child's reading, mathematics, and science instruction and assessment program,
- ask questions, and
- consider how they could reinforce these skills at home and in the community.

Parents/guardians are **not asked to approve** the MOs.

- If parents/guardians indicate that their child has already mastered an objective, the TET must review the use of this MO for Alt-MSA.
- Parents/guardians are requested to sign the cover sheet found in Part 7, page 7-11, and return it within 2 weeks to the school.
- Parents/guardians should keep the copy of the science MOs and reading and mathematics MOs aligned with science content for their use at home.

TETs must document their attempts to contact students' parents/guardians on the form located in Part 7.

MOs Are Submitted for Verification or Technical Review

The intent of the online submission of MOs to the test contractor is to:

- Verify that MOs selected from the bank are present for each student in the appropriate numbers and that they are complete with all components and drop-down information included. **(MOs selected from the Bank will NOT receive any contractor feedback: they are pre-approved upon submission to the contractor for verification.)**
- Conduct a technical review of newly written custom MOs to ensure that they are aligned with the Maryland reading, mathematics (grades 3-8 and 10) and science (grades 5, 8, 10 only) SC objectives selected by the TET and that they contain all the appropriate components so that they can be reliably scored by the test contractor. Any MO from the bank that has been changed in any way will also need to be submitted for contractor technical review.
- There will be two rounds of MO technical review with the first starting in December. All custom MOs must be written by early December with the technical review completed by mid-December. Any MOs returned to the TE for revisions after the second round of technical review feedback in late December, must be changed to a pre-approved bank MO, which will then be resubmitted with pre-approval status to the contractor. No MO can be custom written after mid-December. This includes any new students participating in Alt-MSA.
- During Alt-MSA Portfolio scoring in the spring, the feedback generated during the MO verification and technical review will guide the scoring of the submitted MOs and artifacts. **If noted revisions were not made to those MOs which were identified as needing revisions in order to be scorable, the MOs will be scored “not aligned,” rendering the artifacts submitted as non-scorable.**

The verification and review will NOT critique whether a MO is an appropriate goal for instruction for the student. **Therefore, it is important that the TET collects baseline data and initiates instruction toward attainment of the MOs early in the test window, as appropriate for individual students, and begins data and artifact collection.**



Refer to pages 1-21 through 1-23 for specific Alt-MSA test administration dates.



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Timeline for MO Review

The specific procedures for each step listed below are described in detail in the Alt-MSA Online User's Guides. An Alt-MSA Online Administrator Guide and the Alt-MSA Online Teacher Guide are found on the "Resource Center" tab of Alt-MSA Online.

November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alt-MSA Online will be available for TETs to begin selecting or writing MOs. Principals review the selected/written MOs. Principals monitor the revision and completion of MOs and ensure online submission of MOs to the test contractor for verification or technical review using <i>Alt-MSA Online</i> (http://www.altmsa.com).
Early-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test Contractor performs technical reviews of all custom MOs. Test Contractor posts results of MO Review to <i>Alt-MSA Online</i> for retrieval and editing by TETs.
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TETs revise MOs with Contractor feedback. Principals monitor the revision and submission of MOs to Contractor.
Late-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test Contractor posts results of MO Review. Functionality to write custom MOs disabled. Bank MOs must be selected for new students.



**Insert Alt-MSA
Online Teacher Guide
here when available**

